

62 labeling said goods with said e-box, providing said goods to a shipper having access to database on first Web site, connecting to said first Web site and retrieving said real name and real address associated with said e-box account, and relabeling said goods and delivering said goods to said real address.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 and 12-21 are in this application.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Applicant has amended claim 1 to address the examiner's objections. Claim 13 also stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Applicant has amended claim 13 to address the examiner's objection.

Claim 1 has been amended to define over the prior art cited by the examiner. Claim 1 includes limitations not taught or suggested by the cited patents. Specifically, the prior art cited does not include the steps of:

entering and storing the user's real name and real address on said first Web site,
entering and storing a real credit card number associated with said real name and real address on said Web site,
storing a virtual name and virtual address on said first Web site,
providing said user with a virtual credit card number associated with said virtual name and virtual address,
linking said virtual name to said real name and said virtual address to said real address,
accessing a Web site operated by said online item provider and for presenting said item to said user,

selecting said item to be received by said user from said Web site operated by said online item provider,
providing said virtual credit card number to said online item provider,
utilizing said virtual credit card number to receive a payment for said item selected,
shipping said item to said virtual name at said virtual address,
receiving said item at a location corresponding to said virtual address,
relabeling said item with said user's real name and real address by accessing said stored information on said first Web site,
utilizing said real credit card linked to said virtual name and virtual address to receive a shipping and handling payment, and
shipping said item to said real name at said real address.

The prior art cited does not include the method whereby a user accesses a (first) web site and stores said user's real name and real address on said first Web site. Boies et al. teach "assigning to a user a multi-digit identifier which is stored in a master file database of a trusted third party." Another step not taught or suggested by the prior art cited is prompting user to create an alias (called an e-box) on said first Web, which represents said user's real name and real address. Unlike Boies et al.'s identifier, the e-box is generated on the Internet (i.e. by the user on the first Web site), is changeable by said user on the Internet and nobody else, and is maintained (stored) on said first Web site (not on a third party site).

Although some of the patents cited by the examiner include some of these steps in various forms, the prior art does not teach or suggest the combination of these steps as claimed. More specifically, applicant's introduction of an e-box is unique because it is a new way of

encoding the real name and address of a user—the user himself/herself creates the e-box and no mathematical manipulation of the user data or any other mathematical procedures are involved in the creation of said e-box. Claim 3 depends from claim 1 which should now be allowable.

Claims 12 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boies et al. in view of Bezos. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the examiner's interpretation and application of these patents to the present application. Specifically, neither Boies nor Bezos teach a method whereby a user can be provided with shipping labels in order to send a package or letter. The claimed invention allows a user to set up an e-box account by providing a real name, a real address, and payment information and by choosing an e-box representing real name and real address. More importantly, the e-box account allows the user to order or print shipping labels with said e-box and indicia encoding said e-box. One unique aspect of this method is that the shipping labels may not be prepaid but are preprinted and are thus completely worthless until used, i.e. until said indicia are scanned by a mailer (when this happens, a charge is posted to said user's e-box account on said first Web site). In this manner, any package or letter—not only one(s) involving online transactions—may be shipped without disclosing the identity of the mailing party publicly.

Similarly, claims 14-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boies et al. in view of Rhoads. Applicant has amended claim 14 to address the examiner's objections.

Regarding barcodes, according to USPS regulations, the POSTNET barcodes only code the recipient's address in order to facilitate mail sorting and delivery. They do not provide a method of postage payment. The e-box indicia do not code the recipient's address, they serve as

a method of postage payment. In fact, the e-box method can be used in conjunction with the POSTNET barcodes. A user can simply apply an e-box barcode or indicia to his/her mail, and when that piece of mail is scanned by the shipper, the shipper will connect to the database maintained by the e-box provider and charge that user the appropriate postage amount. Boies et al. only teach assigning numeric identifiers to mail recipients, and the POSTNET barcodes only code the recipients' addresses. There is no suggestion in either reference to combine these two methods to teach the postage payment procedure that the e-box provides.

The e-box method is also different from other postage payment methods such as stamps, meter prints, online postage in that all these methods require payment before a piece of mail is sent. The e-box barcodes or indicia are worthless until they are scanned by the shipper. Therefore, a user can print or be given as many e-box barcodes as he or she wants without incurring any charges until they are used, and without losing any money if those barcodes are accidentally lost or destroyed. The only comparable method of postage payment in this regard is Business Reply Mail. However, BRM differs in that it can only be sent to a single recipient, and that a BRM letter is identified not by a single barcode but by a variety of barcodes and insignia as mandated by the USPS.

Rhoads teaches a product ordering system in which information about everyday objects is relayed to computers or the world wide web by way of scanning of some embedded codes within these objects. This process is unrelated to the e-box postage payment method since the e-box users do not scan any objects, request or view products, relay their payment information or connect to the world wide web every time they want to pay the postage for their mail. They simply affix a preprinted label with their e-box indicia to the piece of mail. The mailer does scanning of barcode


or indicia and the postage amount is withdrawn from the users' e-box accounts. Scanning of barcodes and accessing databases precedes Rhoads' invention, however paying for postage utilizing the e-box has not been described before and cannot be learned from Rhoads. In fact, the Rhoads method can be used in conjunction with the e-box procedure – for example when an e-box user runs out of e-box labels, he or she can use the Rhoads method to order a replacement.

Claims 18-21 have been added by this amendment. For the reasons discussed above with respect to claims 1 and 12-17, each of these claims should be allowable.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be passed to allowance.

A check in the amount of \$339 is enclosed for the two-month extension fee (\$210) and three additional independent claims (\$129).

Respectfully submitted,


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